

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 05492 070702Z

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6692

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 5492

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SN, JA, TH

SUBJ: PM LEE DISCUSSES FOREIGN POLICY WITH JAPANESE JOURNALIST

SUMMARY: DURING NOVEMBER 27 INTERVIEW WITH MOTOO KAEDE (CHIEF EDITORIAL WRITER, TOKYO SHIMBUN AND CHUNICH SHIMBUN), PRIME MINISTER LEE COMMENTED ON SEVERAL REGIONAL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. OF PARTICULAR NOTE WERE HIS VIEWS ON AMERICAN PRESENCE IN SEA, THAILAND'S STABILITY, JAPAN-ASEAN COOPERATION, AND US-PRC RELATIONS. END SUMMARY

1. IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SEA AND THE FACTORS NECESSARY FOR STABILITY, LEE STATED THAT ONE NEEDED TO KNOW THE THREATS BEFORE ONE CAN DETERMINE THE MEASURES TO COUNTER THEM. " WE REALLY ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO SAY..WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE THREATS. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE WILL BE AN ABSENCE OF AMERICAN INFLUENCE BECAUSE IF THAT WAS SO THEN THERE WILL BE PROBLEMS FOR THE REGION. BUT THE AMERICAN INFLUENCE WILL BE MORE AND MORE MATCHED BY INFLUENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION. BUT IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, THE SOVIET UNION CANNOT MATCH THE COMBINATION OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC INFLUENCE AND JAPANESE ECONOMIC INFLUENCE. AND THEREFORE, THERE WILL BE SOME CONTINUATION OF THIS KIND OF ECONOMIC SYSTEM WHICH HAS PREVAILED BEFORE."

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PAGE 02 SINGAP 05492 070702Z

2. LEE CONTINUED BY HIGHLIGHTING HIS CONCERN OVER THE LACK OF ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THAILAND. HE VOICED HOPES THAT CONFIDENCE CAN BE RESTORED AND THAT THAI, JAPANESE AND WESTERN INVESTMENT WILL BE RESUMED. THAILAND "WILL FACE MUCH LESS TROUBLE FROM INSURGENTS THAN, IF THERE IS ECONOMIC DISTRESS AND UNEMPLOYMENT. I THINK THIS IS A VERY CRUCIAL FACTOR...THIS IS ONE OF THE MAJOR CONCERNS FOR THE WHOLE REGION."

3. WHEN QUERIED ON HOW JAPAN AND ASEAN SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR COOPERATION, LEE REPLIED "THAT THE PROBLEM...IS QUITE SIMPLY TO ESTABLISH IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENTS OF ASEAN A CONFIDENCE THAT JAPANESE INTENTIONS ARE NOT JUST TO EXTRACT RAW MATERIALS AND SELL INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS, ...THAT, IN FACT, JAPAN INTENDS TO TRANSFER SKILLS, TECHNOLOGY, CAPITAL...TO HELP THE REGION DEVELOP."

4. ON THE US-PRC RELATIONSHIP, LEE OPINED THAT: "I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE SITUATION BETWEEN THE US AND THE PRC CAN REMAIN STATIC. I THINK MOVES MUST BE MADE TO TAKE FURTHER STEPS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE. BUT WHAT THOSE MOVES ARE, I DON'T THINK WE ARE IN A POSITION TO SAY...MR. CARTER IS NOT LIKELY TO VARY HIS POSITION TOO MUCH, TOO QUICKLY. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE. IT WOULD NOT BE IN KEEPING WITH WHAT WE KNOW OF MR. CARTER."

5. FULL TEXT OF INTERVIEW BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT.  
HOLDRIDGE

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